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USAID Supports Young Women in Nyanza and Western Kenya

“You may be Value Girls, but you’ve *always* been girls of value,” said Julie Gichuru, the face of Kenyan TV and among one of twenty African women named by Forbes magazine as shaping Africa. Julie was not talking to the high profile development executives, or the senior government officers that filled up the ballroom – she was talking to the Value Girls.

Since 2008, the Value Girl program has assisted over 2,000 young women in the marketing and modern production of poultry and vegetables. The Value Girls are young women between the ages of 18-24 from the fishing communities of Nyanza and the Western Provinces of Kenya. Before they joined the program they struggled to secure even a day’s supply of fish. Their courage, along with the support of the Value Girls program allowed them to expand their income base.

Finding and exploring new economic activities is not easy and “through this partnership, Nike and USAID were able to find economic opportunities for young women where there were none,” said Jim Hope, USAID’s Acting Mission Director. As the close-out event, USAID, the Nike Foundation, and a cadre of local partners joined together to celebrate the success and accomplishments of the Value Girls.

Eighty percent of the Value Girls have increased income from their chicken and vegetable businesses, but the impact is not limited to individual progress. The Value Girls program increased food production at the community level and made productive use of arable, uncultivated land. Earning a weekly income, building stronger social connections and networks, gaining and sharing local market insights, the Value Girls progress is self-propelling.

[PHOTO: JULIE GICHURU/QUOTE ““When we talk about sustainability, it’s about continuing to be brave and bold, and having the courage to continue the work that you’ve been doing.” - Julie Gichuru, Value Girls Event]



“The African woman is critical for development on this continent,” remarked Julie Gichuru, as her message was translated into Kiswahili. Caroline said she never realized how important she is to Africa; but because of the contributions she’s made to her family and community, she is always reminded of how important she is to the people who need her most.